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ABSTRACT

An instructional program was designed to improve the oral language skills of kindergarten students. The target group consisted of 10 students who, according to their scores on the Yellow Brick Road Language Battery, were in need of a strong language development program. The instructional plan was based on the Shared Book Experience and other components of the Whole Language Approach. Also included in the project was a parent involvement program. The Test of Language Development-Primary, an oral skills checklist, and a parental log were used to measure the effectiveness of the programs. Results of these measures indicated that exposure to the Whole Language Approach successfully improved the oral language skills of the target group. It was also concluded that exposure to a structured parent involvement program significantly increased the level of parent involvement. (Sixteen references are attached. Appendixes include materials and activities used in both the instructional and parent involvement programs and the oral skills checklist.) (Author/SR)

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IMPROVING ORAL LANGUAGE SKILLS IN KINDERGARTEN STUDENTS THROUGH THE USE OF THE WHOLE LANGUAGE APPROACH

by

TERESA A. WRIGHT

A Practicum Report
submitted to the Faculty of the Center for the
Advancement of Education of Nova University in partial
fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of
Master of Science

The abstract of this report may be placed in a national database system for reference.

July, 1990

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Teresa A. Wright

Abstract

Improving Oral Language Skills in Kindergarten Students Through the Use of the Whole Language Approach.

Wright, Teresa A., 1990: Practicum Report, Nova University, The Center for the Advancement of Education. Descriptors: Kindergarten/Whole Language Approach/Shared Book Experience/Oral Language Skills/ Learning Activities/Parent Involvement/Parent Involvement Activities.

Concerned with the high number of students entering Kindergarten at the target site with poor oral language skills, the writer implemented an instructional program designed to improve oral language skills. The instructional plan was based on the Shared Book Experience and other components of the Whole Language Approach. Also included in the project was a parent involvement program. The Test of Language Development-Primary, an oral language skills checklist, and a parental log were used to measure the effectiveness of the programs. Based on the results of these measures, the writer concluded that exposure to the Whole Language Approach successfully improved the oral language skills of the target group. It was also concluded that exposure to a structured parent involvement program significantly increases the level of parent involvement. Appendices include materials and activities used in both the instructional and parent involvement programs and the oral language skills checklist developed by the writer.

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Practicum Title Improving Oral Language Skills in Kindergarten Students Through the Use of the Whole Language Approach

Student's Name Teresa Wright

Program Site Melbourne Date June 28, 1990

Observer's Name Jean I. Bennett Jean I. Bennett
(please print---------and sign)

Observer's position Principal, H.C.E. Phone # (407) 254-5534

Observer's comment on impact of the project (handwritten):

The impact of the project on the Students [illegible]

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Chapter I

Purpose

Background Information

The target site for this practicum project is located in a metropolitan area of east central Florida. The facility is an elementary school built in 1960, which has 33 classrooms, a cafeteria, media center, offices, and playground. At the target site, there are 52 on staff, 36 of which are teachers. The site serves students in kindergarten through sixth grade, and also provides both full and part-time learning disabled and Chapter One programs. There are currently 570 students enrolled at the target site. According to the target site's annual report, 89 percent of these students are White, eight percent are Black, one and one-half percent are Hispanic, and less than one percent are Asian/Pacific. Most students at the target site are from a low socioeconomic background. Forty-two percent of the school's population is on the free lunch program.

This writer has taught kindergarten at this particular site for three years. Prior to teaching at this site, this writer taught preschool for one school

year on a military base in Japan. This writer is certified in both Early Childhood and Elementary Education. This writer has observed how deficiency in oral language skills hampers a child's progress through the kindergarten program.

The kindergarten program in this writer's school district consists of a curriculum that fosters skill development through activities and experiences appropriate for students who are developmentally five years old. The skill areas which are addressed by the curriculum include gross and fine motor skills, visual, auditory, language, and math skills. Skill development is monitored by the teacher using the district's Group Record of Objectives (GRO Sheet) as a guide. Students who satisfactorily master the kindergarten objectives outlined on the GRO Sheet are promoted to First Grade the following school year. Students who show a need for additional time to master these objectives are retained in kindergarten.

Upon entering school, kindergarten students in this writer's school district are given the Yellow Brick Road test to identify their strengths and weaknesses in the areas of motor, visual, auditory, and

language skills. Approximately, 40 percent of kindergarten students at the target site score in the preventative range on the Yellow Brick Road Language Battery. Therefore, these students have difficulty mastering the language skills required of kindergarten students. If the students cannot master the kindergarten level language skills, they will not be ready to start the formalized reading program in first grade.

Problem Statement

In this section, this writer will discuss the importance of language skills in developing reading readiness illustrating the level of student performance in language skills prior to kindergarten. Data will be collected from three area schools, plus the target site. This writer will also present data regarding levels of parent involvement in the kindergarten program at these schools, plus parent interest to participate in this project at the target site.

The first public school kindergarten was opened in 1873 in St. Louis (Doll, 1989). From that time until the 1960's, kindergarten was basically a transition between home and school. At that time, the

kindergarten curriculum focused on helping students adjust to the routine of school and developing general social, physical, and intellectual skills.

Since the 1970's the number of working women with young children has steadily increased. As a result, more children attend nursery school and day care centers, and are exposed to the traditional kindergarten curriculum at an earlier age. What used to be considered first grade curricula, has now become part of the current kindergarten curriculum. Kindergarten is no longer a transition between home and school, but the starting point for developing those skills required for success in school.

In Becoming a Nation of Readers, the Commission on Reading (1985: 30) points out, "reading must be seen as part of a child's general language development, and not as a discrete skill isolated from listening, speaking, and writing." Kindergarten curricula can enhance a student's readiness to read by providing multiple experiences with oral and printed language. Oral language builds the foundation for reading instruction, and if this foundation is weak, progress in reading is slow and uncertain (Commission on Reading, 1985).

Research also indicates a close relationship between language competence and cognitive development (Bruner, 1978). Having this knowledge, one can only expect to see a change in kindergarten curricula to include effective language development programs.

In this writer's school district, the Yellow Brick Road Test is used to evaluate the auditory, motor, visual, and language skills of beginning kindergarten students. Based on their test results, each student is given a strategy assignment of enrichment, developmental, or preventative. Enrichment strategies are those instructional strategies which serve the promising learner, who emotionally, socially, and educationally accepts challenges and demonstrates creativity. Developmental strategies are those instructional strategies which serve a student who appears to be progressing emotionally, socially, and educationally at an average rate. Preventative strategies are those instructional strategies which serve a pupil with identified or potential learning problems which are usually considered correctable. The conversion table for the strategy assignment is as follows:

Enrichment - 31-36

Developmental - 26-30

Preventative - 25 or below

This writer surveyed the primary specialists at three other elementary schools located in the same general area as the target site. Like the target site, most of the students attending School A and School C are from a low socioeconomic background. Students at School B come from a low to middle socioeconomic background. Each primary specialist at those schools was asked to report the total number of kindergarten students attending their school, and to report the total number of those students who scored in the preventative range on the Yellow Brick Road Language Battery. The primary specialist was also asked to comment on the level of parent participation in the kindergarten program at their school.

School A has 154 students enrolled in kindergarten. Of these students, 76 scored in the preventative range on the Yellow Brick Road Language battery. The primary specialist rates parent involvement at the school as medium. Many parents

volunteer their time to work in the kindergarten classrooms. School B has 160 students enrolled in kindergarten, 23 of these students scored in the preventative range on the Yellow Brick Road Language Battery. It is important to note that most of the students attending School B are from a higher socioeconomic background than those attending Schools A and C. Also interesting to note is that parent involvement was rated as high by the primary specialist at School B. School C has 79 students enrolled in kindergarten. Of these children, 26 scored in the preventative range on the Yellow Brick Road Language Battery. The primary specialist at School C rated parent involvement in the kindergarten program as medium. This rating was based on the number of parents attending a meeting that was designed to provide an overview of the kindergarten program.

Test Population Data

Students entering kindergarten at the target site come from varied backgrounds. Some have had many experiences involving language, while others have been exposed to very few language experiences. There are 99 students enrolled in kindergarten at the target site.

Forty-two percent of these students scored in the preventative range on the Yellow Brick Road Language Battery, which means a score of less than 25 out of a possible score of 36. These students demonstrated difficulty with the following: motor encoding (demonstrating vocabulary knowledge by actions), vocal encoding (describing an object), categories (classification), "go-togethers" (verbally identifying relationships between objects), articulation (pronunciation of sounds), and conversation (communication skills). Students scoring in the preventative range are monitored closely for potential learning problems and usually demonstrate difficulty mastering the Language Skills listed in the district Group Record of Objectives (Appendix A: 59).

Parent involvement at the target site is rated by the primary specialist as being low. The kindergarten teachers at the target site also rate parent involvement as low. This writer conducted a survey of 25 parents at the target site and found that 14 of those parents are willing to participate in activities designed to increase parent involvement in the

kindergarten program, especially in the area of language development.

For the purposes of this practicum project, the TARGET GROUP will consist of ten students from the test population who, according to their scores on the Yellow Brick Road Language Battery, are in need of a strong language development program.

TARGET GROUP DATA

STUDENT NUMBER	TEST SCORE	REPEAT K	CHAPTER ONE	FREE LUNCH	AGE	SEX	RACE
A	6	NO	NO	NO	7	M	W
B	25	NO	NO	NO	5.3	M	H
C	25	YES	NO	NO	6.6	F	W
D	25	NO	NO	NO	5.6	F	W
E	25	NO	NO	NO	5.5	M	W
F	25	NO	NO	NO	5.5	M	W
G	17	NO	NO	YES	6.2	M	W
H	20	NO	YES	NO	6.1	M	B
I	23	YES	YES	YES	6.7	F	B
J	14	NO	YES	YES	5.2	M	W

Within this target group there are seven boys and three girls ranging in age from five years, two months to seven years. Secen of the students are Anglo-Saxons, two of the students are Black, and one student is Hispanic. One student recently moved to the United States from Sweden and has limited English proficiency. Three of the students participate in the free lunch program, three participate in the Chapter One program,

and two of the students are repeating kindergarten. The test scores of the target group range from a low of six to a high of 25 which is the cut-off score for the preventative range. As stated earlier, students scoring in the preventative range must be monitored closely in order to prevent potential learning problems, therefore, it is the responsibility of the primary specialist and the classroom teacher to see that appropriate instructional strategies are being used with these students.

One hundred percent of the kindergarten students in the target group failed the Yellow Brick Road Language Battery and will have difficulty mastering the kindergarten language objectives. At least 100 percent of the students should pass the Yellow Brick Road Language Battery and demonstrate mastery of the kindergarten language objectives. This writer sees a need to develop a program which will improve the language skills of the target group.

Outcome Objectives

The purpose of this project is to improve the oral language skills of a target group of 10 kindergarten students who scored in the preventative range on the

Yellow Brick Road Language Battery. Improving the oral language skills of students who demonstrate a deficiency in this area is important because children with limited oral language ability tend to have more significant difficulty in learning to read than children with strong oral language skills (Hoffman & Buttery, 1985). After participating in a ten week instructional program, it is expected that 90 percent of the target group will demonstrate improvement in oral language skills by achieving one category above the pretested score on the Test of Language Development-Primary (TOLD-P). It is also expected that 90 percent of the target group will demonstrate 90 percent mastery of the skills on an oral language skills checklist developed by this writer. This checklist reflects those skills found on the TOLD-P, Yellow Brick Road Language Battery, and the district Group Record of Objectives (GRO Sheet). As an enhancement component of this project, this writer will seek to improve the level of parent involvement in the kindergarten program at the target site. After a parent orientation, it is expected that 80 percent of the target group's parents will actively participate in

instructional activities as evidenced by completion of parental log. Given the age of the students, and the purpose of this project, these objectives are considered reasonable for this project.

Chapter II

Research and Solution Strategy

Research

For the purposes of this practicum project, this writer will review the following alternative programs which are designed to improve language skills in young children: Socio-Dramatic Play Skills, Parent Involvement, and the Whole Language Approach. This writer will also present instructional strategies used by similar sites located in the same general area as the target site.

The goal of a study conducted by Foster (1985) was to use socio-dramatic play techniques, along with other play techniques in the classroom to increase the development of oral expression in language delayed students. The other play techniques included puppetry, Show and Tell, and language games. An area of the researcher's classroom was set up for the sole purpose of fostering socio-dramatic play experiences. One section of this area was designated as a housekeeping center. The other section of the socio-dramatic play area centered around a community and was designed to create the illusion of a store within the community.

Within these settings the researcher sought to present familiar experiences to the students and designed the socio-dramatic play area in an effort to stimulate as much creative play as needed to produce the final outcome of increased oral expression.

The researcher enhanced the development of the socio-dramatic play area by involving parents in the process of creating the different shops. Parents who were themselves an employee of a business in the community were invited to come in and make a simple presentation about their job. Parents were also asked to help provide the props used in each shop.

Foster used the Test of Language Development-Primary (TOLD-P) as both a pre- and posttest measurement of the target group's oral language skills. After a ten-week implementation period, Foster found that 62 percent of the 26 students participating in the study achieved one level above the pretested score on the TOLD-P. Twenty-seven percent achieved two or more levels above the pretested score. Eleven percent of the students showed no change at all. The students participating in the study were observed by the speech therapist to have a better comprehension of more

difficult sentence structure and to hold longer conversations. The students were also observed to dictate longer stories, and to do so without the hesitation present in the past.

The results of Foster's study allows one to conclude that a well organized exposure to socio-dramatic play and play techniques successfully increases oral expression in kindergarten students. However, this writer's experience when attempting to use this approach has not produced satisfying results. This writer now understands that this approach requires much self-discipline on the part of the students, and fostered by the teacher. The language scores of students repeating kindergarten at the target site have shown little improvement after participating in a program similar to Foster's program.

The practice of reading books to children provides parents with a means of exposing their children to the language and ideas necessary for building knowledge required for eventual success in reading. A study of 38 parent/child dyads found that when parents read to young children, they are functioning as "teachers" and can have a measurable impact on their children's

language and reading development (Lazzari, Bender, & Keller, 1987). The researchers found that including numerous opportunities for discussion, asking questions throughout the text, and looking at and discussing the pictures and printed words were the parent behaviors which contributed to increasing the child's language and pre-reading skills.

Involving parents in fostering the language development of their child was the purpose of a school-based Parental Assistance Plan implemented in Manchester, England during the late 1970's. This plan included dialogue and demonstrations designed to instruct parents on how to use various forms of play techniques such as reciting poetry, playing with color, sizes, and shapes and frequent vocal interaction with the child to foster language development. A study designed to evaluate this plan revealed that nursery students who received special lessons from their parents showed an increase in language development which was sustained after an 18 month period (Beveridge & Jerrams, 1981). The results of both studies presented here suggest that parent involvement and education is crucial in fostering language development.

Emergent literacy is defined as "becoming literate" by developing the skills of listening, speaking, reading, and writing (Wilkens, 1989). This process of gaining literacy occurs when the learner is exposed to language through a multitude of listening and speaking experiences. In recent years, the use of the whole language approach to foster the emergent literacy skills of young students has gained much attention from educators. "The whole language approach (1) provides a literate environment that stimulates and supports the use of language; (2) integrates language arts skills and knowledge by requiring their use in real situations; (3) emphasizes the pupil's own oral language; and (4) stresses the functional uses of language" (Glatthorn, 1988: 46). While most of the research of the Whole Language Approach has focused on its effects on improving reading and writing skills, it is important to note that the Commission on Reading (1985) stresses that whole language activities such as reading and discussing books provide students with the oral language experiences necessary for school success.

The Shared Book Experience component of the whole language program has been shown useful in fostering the

development of the oral vocabularies of kindergarten students (Coombs, 1987). A target group of 24 kindergarten students were exposed to both traditional storytimes and Shared Book Experiences. The traditional storytime consisted of the teacher introducing the book by its title and making a brief statement about its content. The book was then read in its entirety, with few pauses to point out items of interest or significance. The storytime concluded with a few questions about the content and impressions of the story. The purpose of the traditional storytime is enjoyment of the story.

Like the traditional storytime, the purpose of Shared Book Experience is also enjoyment. But, unlike the traditional storytime, introducing the title of the book called upon the students to explore their prior knowledge of the experience or topic presented in the story, and invited the students to relate that personal knowledge to what they might do if they were the character. This practice encourages students to think about what is going to be read before actually beginning. Enlarged versions of children's stories are used during Shared Book Experiences in order for the

teacher to easily model the reading process. These enlarged texts also invite the listener to become involved in the action of the story. While reading the story, the teacher stops at predictable parts in the story and encourages the students to make decisions about what might come next in the story, and why. At the conclusion of the story, students are asked to recall events in the story and asked to comment on their importance. Coombs (1987) found the increase in the students' oral language abilities was significantly higher after participating in a series of Shared Book Experiences than after participating in a series of traditional storytime experiences. Participation in the Shared Book Experiences showed significant improvement in the students' ability to freely recall story elements without probing. Student responses also showed an increase in terms of the richness of descriptions and details about the stories. The results of this study indicates that the Shared Book Experience, a component of the Whole Language Approach, is an effective means of improving the oral language skills of kindergarten students.

Andrea Butler (1987: 3) defines a Whole Language Program as "one in which reading, writing, listening, and talking are integrated in a stimulating natural language-learning environment." Whole language programs are based on the belief that a child's acquisition of literacy is governed by the same processes that operate as a child acquires language (Goodman, 1986). Brian Cambourne (1984) lists the seven conditions for language learning as immersion, demonstration, expectation, responsibility, approximation, employment, and response. In order to better understand how these relate to language acquisition it is important to discuss each condition as it is defined by Cambourne (1984). From the moment they are born, children are surrounded, or "immersed" in a flood of language. This immersion happens in a meaningful, purposeful context. In the process of learning to talk, children are exposed to numerous demonstrations of the language. This occurs over and over again, and more learning occurs when the child is involved in language interaction. Cambourne believes that expectations are very subtle forms of communication, to which learners respond. Children are

expected by the culture to learn to talk, and they do. The responsibility for language learning is left to the child, the child decides not only what, but more importantly when he will master different grammatical structures. As a child is learning to speak, he engages in approximations of the language. The approximations are expected, accepted, and rewarded until the child learns the language. Cambourne's condition of employment refers to the many opportunities the child has to practice the medium of talking. During the language acquisition process, the child is surrounded by those who provide him with feedback that communicates that a message was received. The feedback usually consists of the message being repeated in a conventional, adult, expanded form in a non-threatening, meaning-centered way (Cambourne, 1984).

In Whole Language A Framework for Thinking, Butler (1987) uses Cambourne's conditions for language learning as a framework for describing a Whole Language environment. Those conditions as applied to a Whole Language Classroom are described below:

IMMERSION

Students are surrounded by books, therefore, they are immersed in a flood of the language of books.

DEMONSTRATION

Students are exposed to countless demonstrations of the process of communication through listening, reading, and writing activities.

EXPECTATION

The positive attitude that learning will occur is constantly conveyed to students.

RESPONSIBILITY

The responsibility for learning is shared by both teachers and students. Students are expected to take on more responsibility for their learning and are shown how.

APPROXIMATION

Approximations of reading and writing are met with encouragement and constructive feedback.

EMPLOYMENT

Students are given plenty of time and opportunity to employ their developing communication skills.

FEEDBACK

Students are given supportive and constructive responses which are more than mere judgments of the student's work.

Before deciding upon a solution strategy it is important to explore the strategies used by sites similar to and located in the same general area as the target site. The primary specialist at School A reported that the classroom teachers at that site use the following instructional materials and methods to improve the oral language skills of those students who score in the preventative range on the Yellow Brick Road Language Battery: Peabody Language Development Kit, Storybooks, Fingerplays, and "Newspaper". The primary specialist defined "Newspaper" as the class 'publishing' the class news for the day on chart paper and displaying the "Newspaper" for the rest of the school to read. The primary specialist at School A also pointed out that speaking in complete sentences is both modeled and encouraged throughout the school day. In order to elicit parent involvement at the site, School A hosts a Parent Training Session to train parents on how to assist in the kindergarten classroom.

The parents are primarily used to help run the various learning centers in the classroom. A record of parent participation is kept through the use of a daily log. At School B, the classroom teachers, the Speech and Language Pathologist, and the Guidance Counselor all play a role in improving the oral language skills of those students who score in the preventative range on the Yellow Brick Road Language Battery. The classroom teachers use Weekly Reader, group discussions, puppet shows, and Shared Book Experience to foster language development. The Speech and Language Pathologist comes to each class once a week to conduct language development activities. The Guidance Counselor visits each class once a week and conducts lessons from the DUSO Kit. Parent involvement at School B is encouraged through a Help Wanted flier sent to parents at the beginning of the school year. The flier asks parents to specify how they are willing to assist the classroom teacher and what times of the day and week they are available. The flier also specifies guidelines for parents to follow when working as a volunteer. Like School A, parent participation is recorded using a parent log. The primary specialist at School C reports

using flannel board stories, puppet shows, and the Peabody Language Kit as the instructional methods used by the kindergarten teachers at the site to improve the oral language skills of students scoring in the preventative range on the Yellow Brick Road Language Battery. Parent involvement at School C is encouraged through letters to parents and volunteer coffees. Group discussions, storytime, Peabody Language Development Kit, learning centers, play skills, and small group instruction are the methods and materials currently used by teachers at the target site to improve the oral language skills of students scoring in the preventative range on the Yellow Brick Road language Battery. Parent involvement is requested both during Parent-Teacher Conferences, and on the Kindergarten Student Information form completed by parents at the beginning of the school year. Parent involvement is recorded in a daily log book.

Solution Strategy

After analyzing the options discussed, the instructional methods used at Schools A and C are rejected because their eclectic approach is inappropriate for this project. This writer would

reject the Play Skills program because personal experience demonstrates this approach is not the most effective way to improve the language skills of the target group.

This writer chose the Whole Language Approach as the best solution for the purposes of this practicum project. Research supports the use of parent involvement in improving the oral language skills of young students. The results of the research regarding the success of parent involvement programs are based on preschool age students, therefore, an instructional program based solely on parent involvement is not appropriate for kindergarten students. However, parent involvement is effective (Beveridge & Jerrams, 1981) and is a good choice for the enhancement component of this practicum project.

A balanced Whole Language Program typically includes the following ten elements: reading to students, shared book experiences, sustained silent reading, guided reading, individualized reading, language experience, students' writing, modeled writing, opportunities for sharing, and content area reading and writing (Butler, 1988). Considering the

results reported by Coombs (1987), the nature of the project, and the grade level of the target group, it is most appropriate to place the greatest emphasis on the Shared Book Experiences component when developing the instructional plan to be used in the project. This writer will also place emphasis on the components of reading to students, language experience, students' writing, and modeled writing. School B has found the Shared Book Experience to be effective in improving the oral language skills of kindergarten students.

The implementation period of the practicum project is ten weeks. Due to the nature of the Whole Language Approach, this allows sufficient time for this writer to implement and evaluate the instructional program. The ten week period is also sufficient enough for this writer to attempt to increase parent involvement and to measure the outcome. The materials for implementing an instructional program based on the Whole Language Approach and parent involvement are either owned by this writer, or are available at the target site as part of the standard supplies and materials made available to all teachers; therefore, the cost of implementing such a program is minimal.

Chapter III

Methodology

As stated in the previous chapter, this writer chose the Whole Language Approach combined with parent involvement as the solution strategy for this practicum project. This writer implemented an instructional program based on the Shared Book Experience component of the Whole Language Approach and encouraged parent involvement through the use of a parent orientation letter and weekly assignments to be completed by the student with the assistance of the parent. In order to facilitate a more effective understanding of the project, this writer has divided this chapter into three subsections: Resources, Monitoring, and Evaluation.

Resources

The human resources which were utilized for this project include students, parents, the target site speech clinician, primary specialist, and principal. The target group was comprised of 10 kindergarten students at the target site who demonstrated a need for

an instructional program designed to improve their oral language skills. This writer also used the parents of these students to carry out the parent involvement component of the project. The speech clinician was consulted in order to obtain the materials and training needed to administer the Test of Language Development-Primary (TOLD-P). The primary specialist assisted this writer in administering the pretests and posttests to the target group. Acting in an administrative capacity, the principal approved all written correspondence with parents and the use of the primary specialist in assisting with the evaluations of the target group. The principal also acted as the observer of the project, and in this capacity monitored the progress of the project, and offered advise regarding implementation and any difficulties which were encountered.

Materials resources consisted primarily of Big Books and trade books. Most of these reading materials are owned by this writer. Those reading materials which were not owned by this writer were found either at the target site's library or the public library. Other materials that were needed such as pencils,

markers, crayons, construction and drawing paper, sentence strips, and chart paper were provided by the school as part of the regular school supplies available to all teachers.

Monitoring

The goals of this project were to improve the oral language skills of the target group, and improve the level of parent involvement in the kindergarten program at the target site. Monitoring the project included using the TOLD-P to gather pretest and posttest results, using parent logs to record parent involvement, and maintaining checklists to monitor student progress during the implementation period. Continuous monitoring made it possible to make necessary adjustments in order to deal with problems and improve the project as needed.

Pre-implementation activities required this writer read and collect relevant literature, and attend an eight-hour Shared Book Experience workshop presented by a known publisher of Whole Language materials. Using the knowledge gained at this workshop, this writer developed an instructional plan based primarily on the Shared Book Experience (Appendix B: 61). For the

purposes of this curriculum unit, the Shared Book Experience consisted of four components: (a) warm-up, (b) old favorites, (c) new or focus story, and (d) follow-up. The warm-up was used to assemble the group for storytime and was comprised of familiar poems and songs that complimented the themes used during the project. During the old favorites segment of the Shared Book Experience, the students were encouraged to "read-along" as the teacher read a familiar story. On the first day of each week a new story was introduced to the target group. During the rest of the week this story became the "focus story". The new or focus story was the vehicle for learning and provided the background for "follow-up" activities. These follow-up activities were designed to provide practice in developing those skills required by the target district and tested by the TOLD-P and Yellow Brick Road Language Battery. Follow-up activities also allowed this writer to implement other components of the Whole Language Approach into the instructional program. These other components included language experience, students' writing, and modeled writing. The time period for the Shared Book Experience was approximately 60 minutes,

therefore the target group was exposed to the Whole Language Approach for no less than 60 minutes daily.

The following TIME LINE illustrates the positive impact of the Whole Language Approach.

WEEK ONE: PRETEST AND PARENT ORIENTATION

The first five subtests of the TOLD-P were administered to the target group to establish pretest data. Using the methods specified by the test manual, raw scores were converted to determine the pretest score for each member of the target group. Using the following conversion table, a category was assigned to each student's pretest score.

POOR	50- 69
BELOW AVERAGE	70- 84
AVERAGE	85-115
ABOVE AVERAGE	116-130
SUPERIOR	131-150

Pretest results are recorded in Table 1, page 33. All students, except students A and C cooperated well during the testing sessions. Student A experienced difficulty responding to items on the test most likely because English is the student's second language. Student C refused to respond to most items during the

test, therefore, resulting in a score which did not accurately reflect the student's ability.

TABLE 1

TOLD-P PRETEST RESULTS

POOR	50- 69
BELOW AVERAGE	70- 84
AVERAGE	85-115
ABOVE AVERAGE	116-130
SUPERIOR	131-150

STUDENT	PRETEST SCORE	CATEGORY
A	50	Poor
B	88	Average
C	60	Poor
D	79	Below Average
E	89	Average
F	89	Average
G	79	Below Average
H	68	Poor
I	77	Below Average
J	73	Below Average

This writer found it very difficult to administer the TOLD-P during the regular school day. After gaining approval from the target site's principal, this writer was able to accomplish the task of pretesting by testing students during their special activities period, before and after school, and seeking assistance from the target site's primary specialist.

This writer provided a parent orientation in the form of a newsletter to explain to parents the parent

involvement component of the project. The newsletter explained that each week during the implementation period parents would be given an "assignment" to help their child complete at home. Parents were also instructed to keep a log of how much time was spent on preparing these "assignments" (Appendix C: 72).

WEEK TWO: VERBAL CLASSIFICATION SKILLS

This writer used the book, The Farm Concert, to provide the setting of The Farm as the theme to be used for weeks two, three, and four of the implementation period. The students were quite enthusiastic during this early experience with the Shared Book Experience routine. Their familiarity with the farm theme enhanced their understanding and enjoyment of the activities. Using puppets made by a parent, the students dramatized The Farm Concert. This activity was especially helpful in encouraging Students B, G, and H to express themselves more verbally in class. The book, Are You My Mother?, was used to enhance classification activities. The students classified the animals in the story as being a farm animal or not, having two legs or four legs, and as having feathers or fur as a body covering. Once given the criteria for

grouping, all students in the target group were able to easily classify the animals.

The parent assignment, "My Favorite Farm Animals" required parents to help their child draw or find a picture of the child's favorite farm animal and prepare three sentences to go along with the picture. Students presented the assignment during a daily "sharing" time. With the exception of Student I, all students had a completed assignment to present during their designated sharing time. Students B and G were well prepared. It was evident that the assignments presented by Students A, H, and J were completed by an adult, rather than a student.

WEEK THREE: IDENTIFYING RELATIONSHIPS BETWEEN OBJECTS

After being introduced to the book, Mrs. Wishy-Washy, students created a mask to use during a dramatization of the story. Students A and C who are often too shy to participate, required very little encouragement to use their masks and participate in the dramatization of the story.

The focus of the parent assignment was to provide practice in the skill of identifying relationships between objects. Parents were instructed to help their

child find pictures (in magazines) of at least three different products which are produced on a farm and be prepared to discuss how the product is produced (for example, milk comes from a cow, bread comes from wheat which is grown on some farms). These collections of pictures were displayed in the classroom after each student was given the opportunity to present the completed assignment. When the display of pictures was complete, this writer used the display to evaluate the students' knowledge of the relationship between the products and the producers. All students except Students D, I, and J were able to master this skill by the end of week three.

WEEK FOUR: PICTURE VOCABULARY SKILLS

After viewing a collection of animal picture cards, students were asked to name each animal and identify those animals which are usually found on a farm. A second activity using the animal picture cards involved matching the adult animals to their offspring, and having the students tell the correct name for both the adult and the offspring (for example, hen-chick). A large poster of a farm scene provided the opportunity to introduce words such as silo and loft, which are not

familiar to most kindergarten students. It was surprising the number of students who were familiar with the name of farm animals, including the correct names for the adults and their offspring. As expected, most students were not familiar with the new vocabulary introduced using the poster.

The parent assignment required each family to visit the library, find three different stories about farm animals, and read these books at home. The student was to bring these books to school and be prepared to discuss each story. This assignment had the lowest percentage (30 percent) of complete participation of the parents. Students A, B, and E were the only ones whose parents helped them complete the assignment as requested. Students D and G each brought books from home, but did not visit the library.

WEEK FIVE: ORAL VOCABULARY SKILLS AND REVIEW STUDENT PROGRESS

The book, Grandpa, Grandpa, was used to introduce the theme of Grandparents. Students were required to orally define select words from the story and later decided what body movements to use to dramatize the words during a choral reading of the story. Since the Grandparents theme coincided with a school-wide

recognition of grandparents, the students decided to "perform" the story for their grandparents on "Grandparents Day". Shyness prevailed, and students A, C, and E did not speak during the presentation. The enjoyment of the other students especially Student H was evidenced by their smiles.

For the parent assignment, "My Grandparents", students were asked to bring a photograph of their grandparents to school. In addition, the parents were instructed to assist their child in preparing three sentences about the child's grandparents to share with the class. Response to this assignment was good. With the exception of Student I, all students had a completed assignment to share with the class.

A review of the skills checklist revealed that most of the target group had demonstrated mastery of those skills assessed through week five. However, it was evident Students E, G, H, I and J were not familiar with many letter sounds and had difficulty participating in follow-up activities that involved invented spelling. (Invented spelling refers to the student writing the sounds heard in the pronunciation of a word, and the teacher accepting this spelling.)

Therefore, this writer found it necessary to provide more instructional time on letter/sound associations. Also, after four weeks of parent assignments, it became evident that the parents of students A, H, and J were most often completing the assignments themselves, instead of merely assisting their child. This writer observed that these parents became personally involved in the activities and found them so interesting, that it was a natural tendency for them to directly participate in completing the assignments.

WEEK SIX: DESCRIBING OBJECTS AND COMMUNICATION SKILLS

Prior to revealing the theme of Dinosaurs, or introducing the new book, The Jigaree, the teacher displayed a five foot "Jigaree" (a purple and green "creature" that resembles a dinosaur or dragon with wings) in the classroom to encourage students to make predictions as to what the creature was and what it is named. As expected, over one-half of the target group predicted the creature was a dinosaur. To extend the prediction activity each student was required to describe the "Jigaree" in their own words and defend their earlier predictions. Students B and E used excellent vocabulary. Most of the other students had

to be discouraged from using words such as "thing" and "it" in their descriptions.

The parent assignment was designed to provide further practice in the skill of describing objects. With the assistance of their parents, students were to conceal three objects in an opaque container and be prepared to describe those objects. The student's descriptions would enable a classmate to accurately identify the contents of the container. All students in the target group appeared to enjoy this activity, and once again Students B and E used excellent vocabulary in their descriptions.

WEEK SEVEN: GRAMMATIC COMPLETION

Dinosaur Bob and His Adventures with the Family Lazardo, illustrated for the students the idea of living with a dinosaur. All students in the target group were amused by this idea and enjoyed completing the following sentences:

The dinosaur I would choose for a pet . . .

I like my dinosaur because . . .

My dinosaur sleeps . . .

My dinosaur likes to . . .

My dinosaur is as big as . . .

After using invented spelling to complete each of these sentences the students illustrated each sentence on a separate page and compiled the sentences to make a book entitled, "Living With a Dinosaur". This writer was pleased with the invented spelling ability displayed by Student A during this activity.

Each student was given four dinosaur pictures to use to complete the parent assignment. Parents were to assist their child in placing the pictures in the proper sequence and writing a story to go along with the pictures. Students were to write using invented spelling. Student C, whose abilities are often shielded by shyness, did an excellent job on this activity.

WEEK EIGHT: GRAMMATIC UNDERSTANDING

This writer wrote the sentences from the book, Dinosaur Alphabet Book, on sentence strips and asked a parent to illustrate each of the sentences. These illustrations were displayed on a bulletin board. After having the sentences read to them, the students were asked to place the sentence strips under the correct illustration for each sentence. Students G, H, and J, who were having difficulty with earlier skills,

were able to easily identify the correct picture for each sentence.

The parent assignment required each student to take home a factual dinosaur book. Parents were to read the book to their child and ask the child to identify a plant-eater and a meat-eater from the book. The students were to draw a picture of the two dinosaurs and prepare two sentences about each dinosaur to share with the class. Student F, who had not participated in parent assignment for two weeks, did an excellent job of presenting the completed assignment.

WEEK NINE: ARTICULATION, CONVERSATION, SENTENCE IMITATION

After listening to the story, Dinosaur Beach, students were asked to classify dinosaurs as having lived on land, or in the water. Students worked together to create a large mural that depicted dinosaurs in their correct habitat (land or water). Students B and I emerged as natural leaders and directed the others as to where and what to paint on the mural.

Although the skills of articulation, conversation, and sentence imitation were informally stressed throughout the instructional program, these skills were

the focus of a two-part parent assignment. The first part required students to draw a picture of the student's favorite dinosaur, and with the assistance of the parents, prepare three factual statements about the dinosaur to share with the class. The second part of the assignment required students to rehearse a dinosaur fingerplay learned in class to recite for the other students. All students were able to recite a fingerplay for this writer. However, Students C and H refused to recite for the other students.

WEEK TEN: POSTTEST AND EVALUATION OF PARENT INVOLVEMENT

The TOLD-P was administered to gather posttest results. As with the pretest results, each student's posttest score was assigned a category using the conversion table on page 32. During the testing it was evident the target group had made progress in their oral language abilities. The students were much more confident in their ability to respond. The results of the posttest (Table 2: 44) show that 80 percent of the students scored in the Average, Above Average, or Superior categories. One student scored in the Below Average category, and one scored in the Poor category. Student A who had a great deal of difficulty taking the

pretest, appeared to experience much less difficulty during the posttest. Student C, who refused to respond to many of the items of the pretest, responded to more items on the posttest and had a significant increase in test score as a result.

TABLE 2

TOLD-P POSTTEST RESULTS

POOR	50- 69
BELOW AVERAGE	70- 84
AVERAGE	85-115
ABOVE AVERAGE	116-130
SUPERIOR	131-150

STUDENT	POSTEST SCORE	CATEGORY
A	66	Poor
B	150+	Superior
C	88	Average
D	90	Average
E	105	Average
F	109	Average
G	93	Average
H	79	Below Average
I	93	Average
J	85	Average

Parent logs were returned to school. A review of these and this writer's records confirmed that 90 percent of the parents participated in the parent involvement program (Table 3: 46). Parents were given the opportunity to comment on the program by responding to a questionnaire (Appendix C: 74). All parents agreed that the project was worthwhile in helping to

improve their child's oral language skills. Although most parents felt the assignments were appropriate for the students, many of the them expressed difficulty in finding the time to complete the assignments. All parents indicated the assignments were enjoyed by both themselves and the students. Seven parents indicated their approval of having a required assignment. One parent felt the assignments assured their child of some "quality" activity time at home. After reviewing these responses, and the increase in parent involvement, this writer concluded that the parent involvement program was successful.

TABLE 3

RESULTS OF PARENT INVOLVEMENT PROGRAM

	ASSIGNMENT NUMBERS									
STUDENT	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
A	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*
B	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*
C	*	*	*		*	*	*		*	*
D	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*		*
E	*	*	*	*	*		*		*	*
F	*	*	*		*			*	*	*
G	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*
H	*	*	*		*	*	*	*	*	*
I										
J	*	*			*	*	*	*	*	*

* = Completed Assignment

Evaluation

All assessment activities were directed by this writer. As stated earlier, the primary specialist at the target site provided assistance to this writer during the administration of the TOLD-P. This assistance was sought in order to gather both the pretest and posttest results in the time period

allotted for this aspect of the project. All conclusions regarding the data collected were made by this writer.

The TOLD-P was the instrument selected for pretest-posttest activities. It is used by Speech Clinicians in the target district to identify students with speech and language difficulties, qualify students for services, and monitor student progress. The first five subtests of the TOLD-P are used to evaluate student's oral language ability. Therefore, these were the only subtests administered to the target group.

This writer developed an oral language skills checklist and used it to evaluate the target group's progress. The skills on the checklist were taken from the TOLD-P, the Yellow Brick Road Language Battery and the target district's Group Record of Objectives (GRO Sheet). The Yellow Brick Road test is used by the target district to provide an immediate profile of a child's motor, visual, auditory, and language functioning. The GRO Sheet outlines those skills which must be mastered by kindergarten students in the target district before being promoted to First Grade. For the purposes of this project, only those skills that deal

with oral language abilities were listed on the checklist (Appendix D: 75).

In order to evaluate the parent involvement component of this project, this writer used a parental log to document the parents' participation in the program. This method was chosen because it was easy to implement, use, and provided a systematic means of evaluation (Appendix C: 73).

Given the data presented in this chapter, one can conclude this was a worthwhile project. The growth in the oral language abilities demonstrated by the target group leads this writer to believe that the program had a positive effect on the students. Also, after reviewing the positive responses of the parents who participated in the project it is clear to see that this positive effect extends to the parents as well.

Chapter IV

Results

The basic goals of this project were to use the Whole Language Approach to improve the oral language skills of a target group of 10 kindergarten students and increase parent involvement in the kindergarten program. In order to meet these goals, this writer sat forth to achieve three objectives. First, it was expected that after participating in a 10 week instructional program, 90 percent of the target group would demonstrate improvement in oral language skills by achieving one category above the pretested score on the Test of Language Development-Primary (TOLD-P). As the second objective, it was expected that 90 percent of the target group would demonstrate 90 percent mastery of the skills listed on an oral language skills checklist. For the final objective, it was expected that 80 percent of the target group's parents would actively participate in instructional activities as evidenced by a parental log.

The criteria for objective one indicated an expected performance of 90 percent of the target group scoring one category above the pretest score. Analysis of the data showed only 70 percent achieved one category of growth. However, it is important to note that Student A who scored in the Poor category on both the pretest and posttest showed an increase of no less than two points on each of the five subtests. It is also important to note that Students E and F who each failed to achieve one category above their pretest score, scored 89 on the pretest which is in the low range of the Average category. Unlike the other categories, the Average category spans 30 points, therefore, these students would need an increase of no less than 17 points to move up to the next category. However, the students' posttest scores of 105 and 109 suggest an increase in oral language abilitiy. The posttest results of the TOLD-P suggest the oral language skills of each student in the target group did improve significantly, and therefore this writer concludes that all students achieved the goal of improving their oral language ability.

Objective two focused on those skills tested on the TOLD-P Yellow Brick Road Language Battery and required by the target district. The criteria for this objective required that 90 percent of the target group master 90 percent of the skills specified on a checklist developed by this writer. Table 4 on page 52 illustrates that all skills, with the exception of invented spelling, were mastered by the target group. This data confirms this writer's conclusion that objective two was fully satisfied.

Table 4

Oral Language Skills Checklist Results

	Skill	Target Group A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I	J
1.	Verbal classification	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
2.	Identifies relationships between object.	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
3.	Names pictured objects	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
4.	Observes details	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
5.	Answers questions about pictures	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
6.	Verbally defines words	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
7.	Dramatizes words to show understanding.	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
8.	Uses specific language to describe objects.	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
9.	Communicates using sentences.	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
10.	Describes several events in a story.	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
11.	Process writing.	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
12.	Invented spelling.	Y	Y	Y	N	Y	N	Y	N	N	N
13.	Role plays using sentences.	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
14.	Uses common morphological forms to complete open-ended sentences	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
15.	Uses appropriate responses.	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
16.	Understands simple sentences.	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
17.	Sequences three pictures	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
18.	Articulation.	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
19.	Conversation.	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
20.	Recites fingerplay.	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y

Y = Skill mastered N = Skill not mastered

The criteria for objective three specified that 80 percent of the target group's parents would increase their involvement in the kindergarten program. Data obtained from the parental log revealed the expected increase was fully achieved. In fact, 90 percent of

the parents participated in the program to some degree. Fifty percent of these parents helped their child complete all assignments. The remaining 40 percent helped their child complete no less than five of the assignments.

Based on the results presented here and growth demonstrated by the students, this writer concludes that the exposure to an instructional program based on the Whole Language Approach successfully improved the oral language skills of the target group of kindergarten students. This writer also concludes that exposure to a structured parent involvement program significantly increased the level of parent involvement in the kindergarten program at the target site.

Chapter V

Recommendations

In an effort to improve this project this writer recommends two changes. The first change is increase the time allowed for pretest and posttest activities. A group of 10 students require 20 hours of testing time rather than the 10 hours that were allotted.

The second recommended change is conduct a parent workshop to explain the parent involvement program. This would personalize the program and allow parents to ask questions regarding the assignments.

Educators across the country are finding the Whole Language Approach to be an effective means of improving students' literacy skills. Whole Language programs are found to be especially effective with beginning readers who have a profile that will make failure likely (Boehnlein, 1987). The significance of this project for other teachers is that it demonstrates how the methods of the Whole Language Approach can be used to improve reading skills. It is recommended that the results of this writer's project be made known to

others who are interested in the effects of the Whole Language Approach. Dissemination of such results should start with a building level inservice. In addition, this writer should also publish the instructional program and make the publication available to other kindergarten teachers in the district.

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APPENDIX A

Group Record of Objectives

Appendix A

Group Record of Objectives

LANGUAGE SKILLS

Expressive Language (Oral)

1. Describe objects in relation to the five senses
   - Level 1 - Uses five senses in structured play as in feely bags, cooking activities, sand jars, etc.
   - Level 2 - Uses and describes five senses in teacher directed activities - smelling, touching, tasting, seeing, hearing
   - Level 3 - Makes and describes collages using body parts to classify objects/pictures representing the senses.

2. Communicates using sentences
   - Level 1 - Completes a sentence by adding a word or words
   - Level 2 - Describes objects using sentences during "Show and Tell"
   - Level 3 - Role plays using sentences and shares original stories

3. Interprets pictures
   - Level 1 - Observes recognizable details - colors, shapes, textures, concepts (on, over)
   - Level 2 - Answers questions about facts and details
   - Level 3 - Extracts meaning, describes feelings, voices opinions

4. Describes several events in a story
   - Level 1 - Dramatizes or discusses a story that has been told or read
   - Level 2 - Answers questions about events in a story that has been told or read
   - Level 3 - Retells several events in a story that has been told or read

5. Expresses ideas and thoughts in pre-writing activities
   - Level 1 - Contributes original sentences to a group experience stories as a follow-up to field trips, nature walks, etc.
   - Level 2 - Describes or dictates simple sentences about drawings or experiences; contributes ideas to group experience stories
   - level 3 - Describes ideas for stories - I'm going to write a story about...and contributes ideas to group experience stories

Expressive Language (Written)

1. Expresses ideas and thoughts in process writing activities
   - Level 1 - Expresses ideas or labels drawings by using invented spellings that include scribbling and mock letters
   - Level 2 - Expresses ideas or labels drawings by using invented spellings that include mock letter forms and initial consonants
   - Level 3 - Expresses ideas or labels drawings by using invented spellings that include initial, medial, and final consonants

APPENDIX B

INSTRUCTIONAL PROGRAM

Appendix B

Instructional Program

The instructional program used in this project is based primarily on the Shared Book Experience. For the purposes of this curriculum unit, the Shared Book Experience consists of the following components: (a) warm-up, (b) old favorites, (c) new or focus story, and (d) follow-up activities. The warm-up is used to assemble the group for storytime and is comprised of familiar fingerplays and songs that compliment the themes used in the unit. During the old favorites segment, the students are encouraged to "read-along" as the teacher reads a familiar story. On the first day of each week, a new story is introduced. During the rest of the week this story is the "focus" story. The new or focus story is the vehicle for learning and provides the background for the "follow-up" activities. The follow-up activities are designed to provide practice in developing various designated skills. Follow-up activities allow the teacher to implement other components of the Whole Language Approach into the instructional program. These other components may

include language experience, students' writing, and modeled writing.

In an effort to encourage other teachers to use the instructional program designed for this project, this writer will list the warm-ups, old favorites, focus stories, and follow-up activities used for each theme. The three themes included in this curriculum unit are The Farm, Grandparents, and Dinosaurs.

THEME: THE FARM

WARM-UPS

B-I-N-G-O

Old McDonald Had a Farm

Five Little Ducks

Five little ducks went out to play.
Over the hills and far away.
Mother duck called with a quack, quack, quack.
Four little ducks came waddling back.
Four little ducks . . .
Three little ducks . . .
Two little ducks . . .
One little duck . . .
No little ducks went out to play.

OLD FAVORITES

Dunn, Phoebe & Judi - ANIMALS OF BUTTERCUP FARM

Eastman, P.D. - ARE YOU MY MOTHER?

Ginsburg, Mirra - GOOD MORNING, CHICK

Heller, Ruth - CHICKENS AREN'T THE ONLY ONES

Kwitz, Mary DeBall - LITTLE CHICK'S BIG DAY

Nakatani, Chiyoko - MY DAY ON THE FARM

Nodset, Joan L. - WHO TOOK THE FARMER'S HAT?

Yabuuci, Masayuki - WHOSE BABY?

FOCUS STORIES

Cowley, Joy - THE FARM CONCERT

Cowley, Joy & Welser, June - MRS. WISHY-WASHY

Cowley, Joy & Welser, June - ONE COLD WET NIGHT

FOLLOW-UP ACTIVITIES

1. Dramatize each of the focus stories or an "old favorite" using puppets or masks made by the students or parents.
2. Classify animals in a given story based on the number of legs, skin covering, or habitat.
3. Draw favorite character (or animal) from a story.
4. Illustrate a small copy of Mrs. Wishy-Washy.

5. Use animal picture cards to sort the pictures by a given criteria, and to increase the students' picture vocabulary.
6. Write the animal sounds from The Farm Concert on sentence strips and have students match the animal sound to the correct animal puppet.
7. Watercolor a farm scene.
8. Cut out a barn shape for each student. Cut windows and doors for the barn. Students draw animals in the openings of the windows and doors.
9. Using felt board pieces, have students recall the sequence of animals in the story.
10. Students tell what happened first, second, and last in a story and draw illustrations to go with their statements.

THEME: GRANDPARENTS

WARM-UP

These are Grandma's glasses.
This is Grandma's hat.
This is the way she folds her hands
And puts them in her lap.

These are Grandpa's glasses.

This is Grandpa's hat.

This is the way he fold his arms

And puts them in his lap.

OLD FAVORITES

DePaola, Tomie - NOW ONE FOOT, NOW THE OTHER

Douglas, Barbara - GOOD AS NEW

Hines, Anna Grossnickle - COME TO THE MEADOW

Hurd, Edith Thacher - I DANCE IN MY RED PAJAMAS

Hutchins, Pat - HAPPY BIRTHDAY SAM

Kroll, Steven - IF I COULD BE MY GRANDMOTHER

Mayer, Mercer - JUST GRANDPA AND ME

FOCUS STORY

Cowley, Joy - GRANDPA, GRANDPA

FOLLOW-UP ACTIVITIES

1. After introducing the focus story, ask the students to orally define several of the words from the story then decide what body movements to use to dramatize those words.
2. Read the focus story, using different voices for the two characters. Encourage the students to join the reading.

3. Innovate on the text of the focus story by changing the activity from fishing to something else such as shopping or hunting.
4. Talk about things the students like to do with their grandparents. Encourage the students to draw and write about these.
5. Invite the students' grandparents to visit the classroom. During the visit ask both the students and grandparents to draw and write about their favorite things to do in school.

THEME: DINOSAURS

WARM-UPS

Dinosaurs lived long ago.
some were fast and some were slow.
Some ate plants and some ate meat.
Now they're gone and fast asleep.
Dinosaurs lived long ago.
Some were fast, and some were slow.

STEGOSAURUS (tune : Are You Sleeping?)

Stegosaurus, Stegosaurus,
In the swamp, in the swamp.
Spines upon your back,

With your tail you whack.
Clomp, clomp, clomp,
Clomp, clomp, clomp.

BRONTOSAURUS (tune: Mary Had a Little Lamb)
Bronty was a dinosaur, dinosaur, dinosaur.
Bronty was a dinosaur who grew big and strong.
Bronty ate lots of plants, lots of plants, lots of plants,
Bronty ate lots of plants, and grew big and strong.

TYRANNOSAURUS REX (tune: Four and Twenty Blackbirds)
Tyrannosaurus Rex was walking all alone.
He had no friends to call his own.
He was mean and frightful, no one needed him.
So off he stomped through the swamp looking for a friend.

<u>OLD FAVORITES</u>

Brandenberg, Aliki - DIGGING UP DINOSAURS
Brandenberg, Aliki - FOSSILS TELL OF LONG AGO
Cutts, David - NOW I KNOW MORE ABOUT DINOSAURS
Dixon, Dougal - THE FIRST DINOSAURS
Dixon, Dougal - THE LAST DINOSAURS

Eastman, David - NOW I CAN READ ABOUT PREHISTORIC ANIMALS

Halstead, Beverly - BRONTOSAURUS, THE THUNDER LIZARD

Hoff, Sid - DANNY THE DINOSAUR

Lauber, Patricia - DINOSAURS WALKED HERE

Parrish, Peggy - DINOSAUR TIME

Simon, Seymour - THE SMALLEST DINOSAURS

FOCUS STORIES

Cowley, Joy - THE JIGAREE

Joyce, William - DINOSAUR BOB AND HIS ADVENTURES WITH THE FAMILY LAZARDO

Donnelly, Liza - DINOSAUR BEACH

Whitehead, Pat - DINOSAUR ALPHABET BOOK

FOLLOW-UP ACTIVITIES

1. Before the name of the Jigaree is revealed, encourage the students to make predictions regarding the Jigaree's identity.
2. Encourage the students to tell what they already know about dinosaurs, and record their responses on a language experience chart.
3. Ask the students to identify the similarities and differences between the Jigaree and dinosaurs.

4. Have the students act out the verbs in THE JIGAREE.
5. Classify dinosaurs as being meat-eaters or plant-eaters.
6. After reading the story DINOSAUR BEACH discuss the habitats of different dinosaurs. Have the students work in groups to paint a large mural of dinosaurs in their natural habitats.
7. Match sentences taken from the book DINOSAUR ALPHABET BOOK to illustrations created by a parent volunteer.
8. Ask students to use invented spelling to complete each of the following open-ended sentences:
   The dinosaur I would like for a pet . . .
   I like my dinosaur because . . .
   My dinosaur sleeps . . .
   My dinosaur likes to . . .
   My dinosaur is as big as . . .
   The students can illustrate each sentence to make a book entitled, "Living With a Dinosaur".
9. Provide cardboard shapes for the students to use as tracers and ask the students to draw pictures of favorite dinosaurs.

10. Assemble a collection of several (10-15) dinosaur books. Ask the students to identify those books which are factual and those that are fictitious. Record their responses on chart paper.

APPENDIX C

PARENT INVOLVEMENT PROGRAM

Appendix C

PARENT INVOLVEMENT PROGRAM
ORIENTATION LETTER

Dear Parents,

During the next ten weeks, your child will be participating in a Parent Involvement Program. The purpose of this program is to increase parent involvement in the kindergarten program through a series of parent assignments. The focus of these assignments is to increase your child's oral language skills as well as provide an excellent opportunity for more parent/child interaction. As a parent, your enthusiasm and involvement in the preparation of the assignments will help your child gain confidence and lead to greater success in oral language skills.

The following page lists a brief description for each assignment. This will give you an idea of what to expect during the course of the program. Each week you will be sent a letter explaining the parent assignment for the following week. Also attached to this letter is a parental log. Please complete this log as directed. At the end of the program you will be asked to complete a questionnaire regarding the program. Your feedback will provide valuable information for improving the program.

If you have any questions regarding the program or assignments please contact your child's teacher. Enjoy the assignments and have fun!

Sincerely,

Your child's teacher

Appendix C
PARENT ASSIGNMENTS

1. Read Parent Involvement Program orientation letter. Save the attached parent log to record comments and time spent completing each assignment.

2. "My Favorite Farm Animal". Have your child choose a favorite farm animal and either draw or find a picture of that animal. Help your child prepare at least 3 complete sentences to share with the class about this animal.

3. "Products and Producers". Assist your child in finding pictures (in magazines) of three different products which are produced on a farm. Research nd discuss with your child how this product is produced. Your child will be asked to share the information with the class.

4. "Books About Farm Animals". Visit the public library with your child. While at the library, assist your child in finding three different books about farm animals. Read these books to your child and then ask your child to tell you about the story. Your child will be asked to tell about these books in class.

5. "My Grandparents". Please help your child prepare at least three complete sentences to share with the class on this topic. Also, have your child bring a snapshot of the grandparents to display in the classroom.

6. "Guess What?". Assist your child in choosing three common objects to conceal in an opaque container. Have your child practice describing the concealed objects. Your child will be asked to describe these objects for the other students so that they may guess what is inside.

7. "Dinosaur Sequence". Have your child sequence three dinosaur pictures (supplied by the teacher) in order to make a story. Then have your child glue the pictures in the booklet provided, and "write" a story about the pictures using invented spelling. (As you may recall from Open House and Parent-Teacher conferences, invented spelling refers to the student spelling words by writing what letters are heard in the pronunciation of a word).

8. "Plant-eaters and Meat-eaters". Your child will bring home a dinosaur book from school. Please read this book to your child and have your child identify a plant-eating dinosaur and a meat-eating dinosaur which were named in the book. Have your child draw a picture of these dinosaurs and prepare two sentences about each dinosaur to share with the class.

9. "My Favorite Dinosaur". This assignment has two parts. First, have your child draw a picture of a favorite dinosaur and prepare three complete sentences on this topic to share with the class.

   Second, have your child rehearse one of the dinosaur fingerplays we have been learning in class. Your child will be asked to recite this fingerplay for the teacher.

10. Please complete the Parent Involvement Program questionnaire and return it to school along with the completed parent log.

PARENT INVOLVEMENT PROGRAM

PARENT LOG

Please record the amount of time spent each week completing the parent assignments. Also, use the comments section to record any highlights or difficulties you encounter during the program.

Thank you for your assistance.

ASSIGNMENTS	TIME	COMMENTS
1. Read Newsletter.		
2. Favorite Farm Animal		
3. Products & Producers		
4. Visit the Library.		
5. Grandparents		
6. Guess What?		
7. Dinosaur Sequence		
8. Plant-eaters and Meat-eaters		
9. Favorite Dinosaur		
10. Return parent log. Complete questionnaire		

PARENT INVOLVEMENT PROGRAM
PARENT QUESTIONNAIRE

Please answer the following questions regarding the parent involvement program. Your honest feedback is both helpful and greatly appreciated.

Thank you for your assistance!

1. Did you and your child enjoy working on the assignments?

   Yes No

   If you answered yes to the question above, please indicate your level of enjoyment.

   High Average Low

2. Do you feel the assignments were appropriate for your child and the program itself?

3. How do you feel about a child in kindergarten having a required assignment to complete each week?

4. Did you encounter any difficulties during the course of the project? If so, please explain.

5. Do you feel this project was worthwhile? Do you feel it helped improve your child's oral language ability?

Please write any additional comments you may have on the back of this page.

Thank you again for your assistance!

APPENDIX D

ORAL LANGUAGE SKILLS CHECKLIST

Appendix D

ORAL LANGUAGE SKILLS CHECKLIST

VERBAL CLASSIFICATION

_____ 1. The student verbally groups objects into a common category.

IDENTIFYING RELATIONSHIPS BETWEEN OBJECTS

_____ 2. Given a set of related objects, the student identifies the relationship between the objects.

PICTURE VOCABULARY SKILLS

_____ 3. The student names a variety of pictured objects.

_____ 4. The student observes recognizable details in pictures (colors, shapes, concepts).

_____ 5. The student answers questions about a picture regarding facts and details.

ORAL VOCABULARY SKILLS

_____ 6. The student verbally defines a set of given words.

_____ 7. The student dramatizes words taken from a story.

DESCRIBING OBJECTS, COMMUNICATION SKILLS

_____ 8. The student uses specific language to describe an object or event.

_____ 9. The student communicates using sentences.

_____10. The student describes several events in a story.

_____11. The student expresses ideas and thoughts in process writing activities.

_____12. The student expresses ideas or labels drawings by using invented spellings that include initial, medial, and final consonants.

_____13. The student role plays using sentences and shares original stories.

GRAMMATIC COMPLETION

_____14. When asked to complete an open-ended sentence, the student demonstrates the ability to use common morphological forms.

_____15. The student uses appropriate responses to complete open-ended sentences.

GRAMMATIC UNDERSTANDING

_____16. The student demonstrates the ability to understand simple sentences.

_____17. The student sequences three pictures and sentences to make a story.

ARTICULATION, CONVERSATION, SENTENCE IMITATION

_____18. The student participates in experiences which provide the opportunity to hear and practice sounds that should be occurring developmentally.

_____19 The student uses language in meaningful, reciprocal conversation with peers and adults.

_____20. The student recites fingerplays and songs.

END

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